

House
54 Queen Street
Charleston
Charleston County
South Carolina

HABS No. SC-286

HABS
SC
10-CHAR,
180-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. SC-286

HOUSE

owner in 1969 - Mr. + Mrs. (now restored) Brenner

Street Address: 54 Queen Street, Charleston, Charleston County, South Carolina. *"Thomas Elfe Workshop"*

Present Owner: Mrs. Mary Means DeMerrell, Johns Island, Charleston County, South Carolina. *OWNER IN 1968 - MR. + MRS. BRENNER.*

Present Occupant: Vacant; renovation in progress. *RESTORED - 1968.*

Present Use: Unused.

Brief Statement of Significance: A rare surviving small house of Pre-Revolutionary days with interesting architectural features.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. Location and Ownership of This Property: It was located on the west part of Lot No. 83 of the "Grand Modell of Charleston," made between 1670 and 1680. On December 16, 1746, Alexander Peroneau purchased the property from Thomas Hutchinson [Register Mesne Conveyance Office, Book CC, page 237]. Peroneau's daughter Maria married John Edwards, and by his will, made in 1779 and proved in 1783, he left to his son Alexander "my 3 houses on Queen Street, with messuages and land, etc., north side of Queen Street." Either Alexander Peroneau or John Edwards was probably the original owner of the house now numbered 54 Queen Street.
- B. Date of Erection: About 1760--possibly earlier.

Prepared by Samuel G. Stoney
129-X Tradd Street
Charleston, S. C.
June 1963

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. General Statement:
1. Architectural character: A small frame house of the mid eighteenth century with four fine wood paneled walls, largely in its original state.
 2. Condition of fabric: The basic structure appears sound, but the exterior woodwork and clapboards have lost their finish through long exposure to the weather. Many clapboards need replacing. Interior woodwork has been painted

many times and needs refinishing. The building appears to have had a tight roof throughout the years, so that there is no apparent water damage. Substantial areas of plaster need patching or replacing. Work to renovate the building has begun; the owner intends to put it in good condition throughout and is adding a small one-story wing at the rear.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: 16'-5 3/4" by 30'-2 1/4"; two stories; two bays by three bays. Entrance facade faces west; street facade faces south.
2. Foundations: The foundations are very low, mostly hidden by clapboarding and by extremely dense vegetation. There is a partial brick foundation wall around the exterior and some brick piers under the interior.
3. Wall construction: The frame is of timbers generally 3 1/2" x 5", longleaf yellow pine, studs, girts and diagonal braces. First-floor sill is 5" high by 6" wide. Framing members which could be seen appear to have been hewn; joints are mortised and pegged. Clapboards are applied directly to the frame, without any sheathing; they are 9 1/2" wide, exposed 7 3/4", tapering from 3/4" to 1/2" in thickness, with a bead at the lower edge. Many clapboards, especially those of the second story, appear old; some fragments which have been removed show marks of the sash-saw on the back. The clapboards are generally warped somewhat; those near the bottom of the wall are replacements. The exterior surface has been exposed without maintenance for so long that there is no visible sign of paint. The projection of the window trim, which is very slight, indicates that none of the clapboards is original, and that the original siding material may have been somewhat thinner than that at present. The old clapboards now visible are similar in design to those common early in the nineteenth century in Charleston. There are corner boards, 4" wide.
4. Stoops: A small masonry step on the south wall, and the brick steps at the west entrance, are not original and are of little interest in any way.
5. Chimneys: There are two brick chimneys on the east wall, visible only above the roof; each has two flues. The one toward the north has a double hood of brick; the other has chimney pots, presumably replacements.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: A simple entrance doorway is centered on the west wall. It has architrave trim.

The door has six raised and fielded panels; the outer face is rather worn by exposure, but it is sound. There is a door centered on the north wall, which appears to have been altered. There is physical evidence that at an unknown date a doorway was cut through the center of the south wall and later closed up.

- b. Windows: Windows are double hung and have simple architrave trim and heavy sills. Sash appear to be replacements, but a second-floor window (north bay of west wall) with heavy muntins, nine lights over nine lights, may indicate the original design.
- c. Window shutters: Three six-panel shutters remain on the west wall, hung on wrought-iron hinges. Most other windows have louvered shutters, which appear to be of a later date than the paneled ones.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The hip roof is now covered with sheet metal, painted red.
- b. Cornice: There is a corona and bed molding, over which wood shingles project several inches. The cornice has deteriorated in a few places; it shows traces of a green or blue-green paint. There is an obviously recent round sheet-metal gutter hung outside the cornice.
- c. Dormers: There is one at each end, hip roofed. They appear to be original, although they have lost their sash and are covered on the outside with sheet metal.

C. Technical Description of Interiors:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Cellar: A partial cellar under the south part of the house, occupying a little over one-half of the area, was formerly entered from a doorway at the center of the east wall, now closed up and covered by clapboarding. This appears to have been unused and closed off for many years.
- b. First floor: There is a central stair hall, with one room on each side of the hall. There is a fireplace approximately centered on the east wall of each room.
- c. Second floor: This is similar to the first floor, except that the central hall is wider, at the expense

of the north room. At some time, apparently in the present century, a bathroom was installed at the west end of the hall, with a thin matched and beaded partition. A small attic scuttle is located over the central part of the hall; this appears original. At the time the bathroom was built, its ceiling was removed and a large hinged scuttle to the attic was substituted.

2. Stairway: An enclosed stair runs from the first to the second floor; the upper half consists of winders. A railing with turned balusters encloses the well, at the second-floor level. A simple wainscot follows the slope of the stair.
3. Flooring: Joists are 3" x 8", spaced generally 18" on centers. The second-floor joists bear on 3" x 5" girts. At some time the first floor was given an additional covering of narrow pine flooring. On the second floor and attic the original wide longleaf yellow pine (single) boards remain visible; they are 1" thick, tongue and groove, widths varying from 7" to 9". A few of the original floor boards can be seen through ceiling holes, and pit-saw markings appear on the under side. The original flooring needs some smoothing but is otherwise in good condition.
4. Wall and ceiling finish:
 - a. Plaster: The ceilings and the walls--above the wainscot--are plastered with shell-lime plaster. The original lath is split, although some rotary-sawn lath appears in patches. Original lath was nailed with wrought-iron nails. Portions of the plaster, which is quite soft, have been patched and are uneven. It has been painted but much of the paint has deteriorated.
 - b. Wainscoting: All rooms have a wainscot made of two wide boards, which show pit-saw marks on the back. These boards, and the dado rail and base, are nailed directly to the studs.
5. Doorways and doors: Openings have architrave trim. Openings on the first floor have modern replacement doors; those on the second floor appear to have retained their original doors, which have six panels--raised and fielded panels on one side and plain on the other side. The old doors appear sound.
6. Decorative features and trim: All rooms have a wood cornice, which is the same design throughout. Wainscoting is described above. The east wall of each room is

entirely paneled in wood, raised and fielded panels. Large panels over each mantel appear to be of a single wide board. Mantels have architrave moldings around the fireplace openings, and shelves in the form of a classical cornice. In the south first-floor room are semicircular cabinets on each side of the chimney. Cabinets in the north first-floor room, on each side of the chimney, appear to have been altered somewhat, but were probably simpler. A low door with raised and fielded panel, found in the building, appears to have come from the lower part of one of these cabinets. The paneling is generally in excellent condition except for accumulated paint. Some of the dado rails are worn in places.

7. Notable hardware: Doors on the second floor retain original wrought-iron "HL" hinges. Some retain original wrought-iron box locks; on others are cast-iron box locks and other replacements of no historic interest.
8. Heating: There is one original fireplace in each room. The hearths are all replacements.
9. Miscellaneous: The entire attic space is lined and floored with wide, tongue-and-groove, longleaf yellow pine boards up to 14" in width. This work appears to be original with the construction of the house. Position of nails and evidence from measurements indicate that roof rafters are 3" x 5", spaced 24" on centers, with a tie near the top. "Headroom" in the attic is 5'-6 1/4".

- D. Site: This house is on a narrow lot in a neighborhood which is closely built up. The frontage is approximately 22', depth 120'. The east wall is on or very near the property line, and the south wall at the sidewalk line. There are no indications of formal landscaping. There are remains of an old brick cistern in the rear yard.

Prepared by Harley J. McKee, Architect
National Park Service
June 1963

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

Addendum to:
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54 Queen Street (Elfe, Thomas, House)
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